

March 11, 2021

*The Honorable Bronna Kahle
Chair, House Health Policy Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
124 North Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48933*

Dear Chair Kahle and Members of the House Health Policy Committee:

On behalf of the Epilepsy Foundation and our state affiliate, Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan, we write to support the intent of House Bill 4358 and share that we will support this bill with changes.

The Epilepsy Foundation is the leading national voluntary health organization that speaks on behalf of the at least 3.4 million Americans with epilepsy and seizures. We foster the wellbeing of children and adults affected by seizures through research programs, educational activities, advocacy, and direct services. Epilepsy is a medical condition that produces seizures affecting a variety of mental and physical functions. Approximately 1 in 26 Americans will develop epilepsy at some point in their lifetime. For the majority of people living with epilepsy, epilepsy medications are the most common and most cost-effective treatment for controlling and/or reducing seizures, and they must have meaningful and timely access to physician-directed care. Epilepsy medications are not interchangeable and treatment of epilepsy is highly individualized. There is no “one size fits all” treatment option for epilepsy, and the response to medications can be different for each person. Maintaining seizure control with minimal side effects requires careful evaluation and monitoring by physicians and their patients. To change, limit, or deny access to medications could be extremely dangerous.

We support a bill that would prevent insurers from changing the terms of health plans, as they relate to prescription drug coverage, mid-year. Without a law like this, health plans are free to end or change coverage for a particular medication mid-year, leaving beneficiaries with higher out-of-pocket costs or no coverage at all for a therapy. This is exceptionally concerning for individuals with epilepsy because epilepsy medications are not interchangeable and they rely on them to maintain seizure control.

Individuals select a health plan based on the information they have at the outset of the benefit year, and when insurers engage in mid-year coverage changes, beneficiaries do not have an option to change plans mid-year based on these coverage changes. This can present a dangerous situation, especially for people living with epilepsy because when their medications are switched, or they experience a delay in accessing their medication, they are at a high risk for developing breakthrough seizures and related complications including death. Limits to physician-directed care can also significantly increase medical costs related to preventable

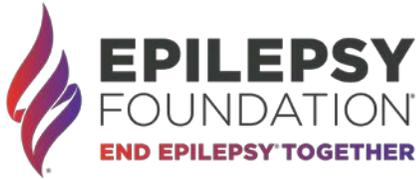
National Headquarters

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Our mission is to lead the fight to overcome the challenges of living with epilepsy and to accelerate therapies to stop seizures, find cures, and save lives.

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24/7 HELPLINE **800.332.1000**



seizures, along with lost wages and productivity, not just for the individuals living with epilepsy but also their families and communities.

The Epilepsy Foundation and the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan are hopeful that this bill will align with the intent after necessary revisions that protect people from mid-year changes to prescription drug formularies. And when a change must occur, that it is guided and approved by the beneficiary's prescribing Physician.

The objective to curtail non-medical switching is a laudable one and we look forward to working with the bill sponsor and the House Health Policy Committee to ensure we get the policy right. Brianna Romines can be contacted directly at bromines@epilepsymichigan.org and 248-809-4819.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brianna Romines".

*Brianna Romines
President
Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Thrall".

*Laura Thrall
President & CEO
Epilepsy Foundation*